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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this monograph, the second in a series, is to explore the current problems, needs and concerns in rehabilitation program evaluation in Michigan. The analysis of the program and financial plans submitted by each state rehabilitation agency focuses the discussion on the following topics: (1) articulation of agency goals and objectives through a continuous needs assessment; (2) development of linkages between state agencies and the Rehabilitation Services Administration to increase information dissemination and utilization; (3) presentation of evaluation information to decision-makers without undue delay; (4) recognition of the political context within which evaluation occurs; and (5) development of a comprehensive, competency-based client-outcome evaluation strategy. The contributions of each area provide a different perspective for the identification of state agency goals and objectives. (BN)

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MICHIGAN STUDIES IN REHABILITATION

Series 1, Monograph II

General Editors:

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A Survey of the Current Status and Program Evaluation Needs in the State-Federal Rehabilitation Program

By

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

This is the second monograph in The University of Michigan's Rehabilitation Research Institute, Michigan Studies in Rehabilitation series. The initial document, Program Evaluation Approaches for State Rehabilitation Agencies: Current Status and Future Directions was written by Miller, Lee, Wargel, and Won (1977). That monograph surveyed approaches to rehabilitation program evaluation and included discussions on (a) program evaluation as a component of program development, (b) program evaluation needs, (c) the motivation for state agency program evaluation (d) the current status of program evaluation in state agencies, (e) conceptual approaches to state agency program evaluation, and (f) future directions for state agency program evaluation.

The present study was designed to assess rehabilitation program evaluation problems, needs, and concerns. The data for the investigation was collected through a content analysis of the Program and Financial Plans submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration by state agencies during fiscal year 1977.

This investigation was the first survey of state agency personnel to determine program evaluation needs since Ridge (1973) examined program evaluation practices in state

agencies. As such, this study is the first in-depth examination of evaluation needs from the state agency perspective since passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, mandating evaluation of the rehabilitation program.

The results of this study are intended for all constituents of the rehabilitation program concerned with evaluation, particularly program administrators, planners, and evaluators, RSA central and regional personnel, counselors, clients, and rehabilitation counselor educators. The range of problems and needs reflected by this study provides an indication of the high level of thinking and reflection being given program evaluation in state agencies. It is evident that personnel in state rehabilitation agencies see the value of program evaluation, particularly with regard to using evaluation information for program planning to develop short and long range goals, and assess the differential effects of rehabilitation programs on outcomes with clients.

This study provides information which may be used to establish a baseline for evaluation issues of concern to states. It is hoped that this investigation will encourage and stimulate further thinking and development in rehabilitation program evaluation. Based upon the issues identified, much exists which can be developed to increase evaluation capacity in rehabilitation.

We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Nathan Acree of the Rehabilitation Service Administration, the project

officer for the Institute, for his help in obtaining needed documents for this study. The contributions made by the staff of the Institute are appreciated. Special appreciation is expressed to Mrs. Susanna MacKay for the secretarial support she provided. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Robert Struthers of the Michigan Bureau of Rehabilitation and Mr. Terry Conour of the Chicago regional office of RSA for their assistance in the development of several concepts presented in the monograph.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this monograph is to explore the current problems, needs, and concerns in rehabilitation program evaluation. To determine these issues, a content analysis survey was conducted of the 1978 Program and Financial Plans (PFP's) submitted in fiscal year 1977 by each state rehabilitation agency to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The PFP's reviewed covered fiscal years 1978, 1979, and 1983.

Based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study, an objective of this monograph is to enable rehabilitation agencies effectively to identify and develop evaluation questions, implement evaluation studies based on those questions, and disseminate and utilize the resulting evaluation information. The attainment of the above tasks is intended to increase the use of program evaluation information to support the state agency program decision making process through a systematic process of program planning and development. The analysis of the PFP's will focus on a discussion of the following topics: (a) articulation of agency goals and objectives through a continuous assessment of client and program needs,

(b) development of linkages between state agencies and RSA to enhance dissemination, utilization, and communication of evaluation information, (c) presentation of evaluation information to program decision makers on a timely basis and in an understandable format, (d) recognition of the political context within which evaluation occurs, and (e) development of a comprehensive, competency-based client-outcome evaluation strategy.

Purpose for Conducting the Survey

This survey was conducted to determine the program evaluation problems, needs, and concerns of state rehabilitation agency personnel. Determining how program evaluation is viewed from the field is important for three reasons. First, people responsible for program evaluation at the state rehabilitation agency--program evaluators, planners, and administrators--have first-hand knowledge and experience with implementing and conducting evaluation studies. Second, these individuals are responsible for reporting and submitting evaluation data to comply with federal standards for rehabilitation program evaluation and conducting other program evaluation activities. Third, from the vantage point of the field, state agency personnel are in a unique position to comment on rehabilitation program evaluation needs and concerns.

The problem addressed by this survey is to identify, through a review of the fiscal year 1978 PFP's, program evaluation issues of concern to states. Since the ultimate

objective of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program is to help clients reach their vocational objectives generally achieved through the provision of rehabilitation services, program evaluation is viewed as a tool for helping rehabilitation personnel determine the degree to which client and program objectives are being met. Thus, information from the PFP's may be useful as a procedure for unobtrusively determining agency goals and objectives as expressed through evaluation issues.

This survey has implications for various aspects of the VR program. The findings will provide a comprehensive and concise examination of evaluation issues judged important by state rehabilitation agency personnel. As a result, this monograph will help clarify and facilitate an understanding of some of the major issues in evaluation as viewed by the states. One of the goals of this survey, as discussed previously, is to examine procedures to determine and implement appropriate evaluation approaches for resolving the issues identified. Because evaluation issues ultimately reflect client needs and the delivery of services to clients, the findings of this study are viewed as important to a wide range of constituents of the rehabilitation program. These constituents include program evaluators, planners, administrators, rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation researchers, and clients of the rehabilitation program.

The survey was conducted by the University of

Michigan Rehabilitation Research Institute (UM-RRI) as part of its mission to conduct programmatic research in the area of rehabilitation program evaluation. The problems, needs, and concerns as seen by the states are important dimensions of rehabilitation program evaluation. It is hoped that this survey will provide insights into the evaluation process in rehabilitation.

Background and Status of Rehabilitation Program Evaluation

A cursory review of the historical antecedents of rehabilitation program evaluation will be presented. This is intended to provide the reader with a contextual framework and background for the present survey. A more comprehensive coverage of these aspects is provided in another UM-RRI document (Miller, Lee, Wargel, and Won, 1977) and elsewhere.

A survey of state rehabilitation agency program evaluation practices was conducted by Ridge (1973) prior to the implementation of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. Thus, this study pre-dates the federal mandate for program evaluation. This investigation was part of the "Project for Cost Benefit Analysis and Evaluation of Rehabilitation Services," at the University of California-Berkeley's Institute for Urban and Regional Development. The study explored these questions: (a) Who does the evaluation? (b) Who is involved in the evaluation procedure? (c) What types of program evaluation studies are completed?

(d) What are the data sources used? (e) What types of measures are used to identify results? and (f) How are the evaluation results utilized?

Overall, the results of the survey indicated that a significant number of state agencies were aware of the need for evaluation and had begun to set up units to work in this area. Some of the respondents' comments indicated that this and other similar surveys had served to increase state agency awareness of the need for evaluation. A number of states were using evaluation measures and statistics but apparently not to their greatest advantage. A problem identified was that most evaluation personnel did not have formal training in evaluation design, program analysis, and methodology, or in the complicated problems involved in the evaluation process. Program evaluation at that time was not a field in which specific training was available. The backgrounds of evaluation staffs were primarily in the substantive rehabilitation field, rather than in fields which might provide methodological "handles" for evaluation design and thinking. The state-of-the-art in program evaluation in 1973 had largely focused on measuring the success of the rehabilitation process in terms of numbers and had not been oriented as much to getting behind these statistics to determine what is responsible for program or client success or failure, what alternatives are available, and which alternatives achieve objectives in the most effective and efficient way (Ridge, 1973; Collignon, 1973).

In a summary of the work of Collignon and Thompson (1972) on state agency practices in program evaluation, Spaniol (1975) noted that these investigators found states to be moving into evaluation activities. However, the states were reported to be uncomfortable with the adequacy of existing strategies, methodologies, and instruments. Needs were noted in the following areas: (a) upgrading the skills and capability of staff to do evaluations, (b) encouraging the utilization of known strategies and methods, (c) fostering research on new measures of impact on client needs to include qualitative perspectives, judgments of clients and counselors, (d) developing measures of outcome that would allow comparisons across programs, (e) monitoring the quality of evaluation studies, (f) developing multiple measures of client change and outcomes as alternatives to the traditional "26 closure," and (g) setting up mechanisms for coordination, interaction, and exchange of information (p. 4).

Collignon (1973) categorized the types of evaluation which occur in rehabilitation agencies. Three of the most common were (a) case review, (b) case flow analysis, and (c) program impact analysis. Case review involves examining actual case records from a fiscal and administrative perspective. Case flow analysis is the examination of input and process variables. It looks at caseload statistics, including total number of cases per counselor, and ratios such as closures to counselor. Program impact

analysis covers agency outcome measures and the impact of rehabilitation services on the client and community.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandated the state-federal rehabilitation programs establish procedures to

> ...measure and evaluate the impact of all programs authorized by this Act, in order to determine their effectiveness in achieving stated goals in general, and in relation to their cost, their impact on related programs, and their structure and mechanisms for delivery of services ... (p. 36).

Accordingly, on December 19, 1975, in the Federal Register, revised regulations setting forth Standards for Evaluating Rehabilitation Programs were published. As was stated in a 1975 information memorandum, the purpose of the standards was "to establish a criterion for evaluating program effectiveness, for increasing program accountability, and to encourage state vocational rehabilitation agencies to conduct more comprehensive self-evaluation ..." (p. 1).

Four separate issues were to be addressed in the application of the standards: (a) impact on the target population, (b) degree of change in reaching gainful employment goals through rehabilitation services, (c) performance towards meeting the priority of providing services to the severely handicapped, and (d) effectiveness in the utilization of available resources. Following this statement, nine General Standards for Program Evaluation were set forth under three headings: (a) persons served, (b) program efficiency, and (c) client outcomes. Subsumed within each of the nine standards were various data

elements which set forth statistical processes intended to measure the program aspects of the particular standard (p. 1-3). Since fiscal year 1974, all state rehabilitation agencies (general and blind) have been required to submit program data for each of the data elements of the standards.

The Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (Rubin, 1974) summarized the nine standards into the following three program evaluation areas--input, process, and outcome:

1. Evaluate the population eligible for rehabilitation (input)
    a. Standard One: ...to serve the target population equitably
2. Evaluate the process of rehabilitation (process)
    a. Standard Four: ...to use resources efficiently
    b. Standard Five: ...to ensure manageable caseloads for counselors
    c. Standard Three: ...to avoid undue delays in the process
    d. Standard Seven: ...to provide needed post-employment services
3. Evaluate the outcomes of rehabilitation (outcome)
    a. Standard Nine: ...to ensure client satisfaction with the written rehabilitation program
    b. Standard Two: ...to place clients in relevant gainful employment
    c. Standard Six: ...to ensure retention of the benefits achieved through rehabilitation
    d. Standard Eight: ...to identify why clients are not successfully rehabilitated

As of this writing, Standard Seven, "...to provide needed post-employment services..." has been eliminated from the federal reporting requirements.

The RSA Forward Plan and Fiscal Year 1978 Budget Request reviewed past studies and identified several areas of concern. Previous evaluation studies have revealed that (a) services were often provided to ineligible persons; (b) services, in many instances, were provided in a dilatory manner, resulting in clients' obtaining employment lower than their true potential or being considered not-rehabilitated; (c) rehabilitation program effects, in many cases, were limited and not long lasting; and (d) post-employment service quality varied widely among state agencies, from effective to almost non-existent. The RSA Forward Plan did not present any specific recommendations for remediation of these deficiencies.

At the present time, Berkeley Planning Associates (Shea and Collignon, 1977) are engaged in an effort to further refine the standards for evaluation under a contract from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The development of a set of standards which comprehensively covers the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program will be addressed, in addition to the development of appropriate methods for measuring compliance (data elements) with the standards and the development of a system for implementing the standards. These will be integrated with the basic planning and evaluation function of the VR program (Shea and Collignon, 1977).

Three participatory planning conferences were sponsored by RSA in 1977. The purpose of the conferences was to generate and prioritize research and evaluation objectives consistent with the emphasis of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which will be used to develop RSA's research and evaluation strategy. The conferences were attended by participants representing the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, research and training centers, state agencies, consumer groups, contractors, university rehabilitation counseling programs, and RSA central and regional offices. The results of these planning conferences complement, and can be examined in conjunction with, the results of this survey.

The conference design followed a participatory planning model which included the following components: (a) identification of problem areas; (b) development of objectives for each problem area; (c) prioritization of objectives; and (d) development of rationale for prioritization. In addition, the planning conference conducted at at the University of Michigan's Rehabilitation Research Institute identified projects related to the identified objectives. As a way of organizing, participants were divided into working groups according to the four RSA sub-goals which were used as a structure for the conference. These sub-goals are Recruitment and Selection, Restoration and Training, Employment, and Capacity Building.

Summary

The purpose of this monograph is to present the results of a content analysis survey of state rehabilitation agency 1978 PFP's submitted during fiscal year 1977. The survey was conducted as a means of determining rehabilitation program evaluation problems, needs, and concerns. Based on the results of this study, a discussion will focus on the following: (a) articulation of agency goals and objectives through a continuous assessment of client needs, (b) development of linkages between state agencies and RSA to enhance dissemination, utilization and communication of evaluation information, (c) presentation of evaluation information to program decision makers in a timely and utilizable format, (d) the political context within which evaluation occurs, and (e) development of a comprehensive, competency-based client-outcome evaluation strategy.

Prior to the present investigation, a survey of evaluation practices in rehabilitation was conducted by Ridge in 1977. The results of the survey indicated that a significant number of state agencies were aware of the need for evaluation and had begun to set up units to work in this area. A number of states were using evaluation measures and statistics but not to greatest advantage. A problem identified was that most evaluation personnel did not have formal training in evaluation design, program analysis, and methodology, or in the problems involved in

the evaluation process.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandated the rehabilitation program develop procedures to systematically evaluate all programs under its jurisdiction. This resulted in the development of nine standards for evaluation of the basic client support program. At the present time, efforts are under way to revise and improve the present standards and other aspects of evaluation in rehabilitation.

CHAPTER II

THE CURRENT STATUS OF PROGRAM EVALUATION NEEDS AND CONCERNS

This section of the monograph describes the current status of program evaluation problems, needs, and concerns of state agencies as determined by a content survey and analysis of the PFP's. The narrative section of the PFP's covers a broad range of VR program activities. Each subsection was examined to determine its respective evaluation issues. Evaluation problems relating to the rehabilitation program were included where it was felt the development of evaluation studies is needed to provide information to help resolve problems, needs, and concerns identified by the states in these areas.

Analysis of the Program and Financial Plans

The data of the investigation were obtained through a systematic content analysis of the narrative sections of the PFP's from all 82 (general, blind, and combined) VR state agencies submitted in fiscal year 1977 and covering fiscal years 1978, 1979, and 1983.

The use of the PFP to identify program evaluation issues has advantages and disadvantages. It is helpful that the PFP can be used as a tool to provide assistance to

state agencies and RSA in the systematic development of program goals and objectives. It provides the rationale for the development of state agency goals and objectives together with identification of resources necessary for their accomplishment. The PFP is also used as a resource document for developing program data for short and long range planning, administration, and evaluation of the rehabilitation program.

The PFP requires an extensive amount of reporting on program issues. States are given the opportunity to freely express and identify critical program problems, needs, and concerns. As a result, a large amount of data is available on program evaluation and related issues. Because states are able to project their plans within broad guidelines, much valuable information is contained within the PFP's, covering a wide range of program areas. This "projective" nature of the PFP's is a limitation because it makes a systematic analysis of the data a difficult task. It is almost an impossible task to tabulate and statistically treat the data in a reliable and valid manner. Analysis procedures had to be developed to determine objectively the program evaluation concerns within all 82 state agencies.

Since a major obstacle to the full utilization of the PFP's was that they do not provide for an objective analysis of the data contained within them, it was necessary to rely upon experiential and clinical judgments in developing insights, making inferences, interpreting, and reaching

conclusions. In many instances, needs and issues identified in the PFP's were not stated in terms of evaluation questions, although they were clearly the type of problem that could be examined through an evaluation study. Thus, it was necessary to translate the issues in the PFP's into evaluation terminology. Where this was done, the original meaning or intent of the issue was not modified or changed in any other way.

Having developed a procedure to identify program evaluation needs, it was necessary to devise a process to analyze this information. In order to determine the issues to include in this monograph, several related procedures were followed. As part of the process of analyzing the PFP's, judgments and assumptions were made regarding evaluation problems, needs, and concerns identified by (a) one state only and (b) by several states. After the evaluation issues were catalogued, a rule needed to be established which would be used to determine whether the issue would be included in the monograph. The criteria and guidelines for this rule were as follows:

1. Was the issue addressed in the RSA strategy for fiscal year 1977?
2. Was the issue identified in any of the participatory planning conferences held during fiscal year 1977?
3. Was the issue in the RSA Forward Plan and Fiscal Year 1978 Budget Request?
4. Was the issue in the Rehabilitation Act?
5. Was the issue indicated by more than one state agency?

6. If the issue was identified by only a single state, was the evaluation need adequately documented in the PFP?

7. If an evaluation issue did not meet the criteria of 1-4 above, was the need clearly documented and explained in the PFP?

8. For criteria 1-7, does the issue have implications on a national scale?

It was recognized that some important evaluation topics might be overlooked by the above criteria. To avoid that problem, an attempt was made to assign priority and rate each evaluation issue. Upon completing that task and using objective and subjective judgments based upon the established criteria, a decision to include or exclude each issue was made. As a result, some issues included met several of the criteria, while others met only one. The procedure was a systematic attempt to objectify highly subjective data.

Current Status, Problems, Needs, and Concerns in State Agency Program Evaluation

The following is the summary of findings from this survey of PFP data, classified in relation to ten VR program functions and areas: (a) evaluation, (b) the severely disabled, (c) rehabilitation facilities, (d) personnel development and training, (e) management systems, (f) affirmative action, (g) audit deficiencies, (h) placement techniques, (i) innovation and expansion, and (j) changes in vocational rehabilitation programs resulting from program evaluation studies. Within each of these functions and

areas the results are further classified into subtopics. A discussion of the implications for future development and practice is included within each program function and area listed.

The nature of the above program areas and functions is such that each relates to different components of the VR program. For example, "placement techniques" is a specific and discrete VR activity, whereas "evaluation" cannot be directly related to a specific program area but can cover and include overlapping or discrete aspects of the program. To clarify these divergencies, a classification procedure is required so that the results can be examined within the framework of the overall VR program. Such a contextual framework has been developed by RSA through the establishment of the program subgoals for the administration of the rehabilitation program. To the extent possible, an attempt will be made to discuss the results of this survey within the context of these program subgoals. The RSA participatory planning conferences used these subgoals for the development of research and evaluation objectives. The RSA subgoals and their definitions are listed below:

1. Recruitment and Selection - To assure that state agencies improve the process of outreach, referral, eligibility determination, and individualized client planning so that handicapped individuals receive appropriate services

2. Restoration and Training - To improve through state agencies the program content and use of physical and mental restoration, vocational training, and other supportive rehabilitation services

3. Employment - To improve through state agencies the process of job identification, placement, and follow-up support, and to assure increased opportunities for optional employment related to the present and potential job market, including homebound employment and the self-employed.

4. Capacity Building - To improve state capacities in policy, program, and resource management so that available rehabilitation resources can best be utilized to achieve the program mission, goal, and subgoals.

Examination of the 82 PFP's revealed no consistent pattern of recognized problems, needs, and concerns but did indicate certain significant areas of interest to this study.

Evaluation

The PFP guidelines for the evaluation section request states to "suggest candidate areas of the program that you would like to see evaluated within the next five years, either through state initiatives and/or federal sponsorship." Based upon the analysis of the data, a majority of responses in this area can be categorized in the RSA category of Capacity Building. The following are the state agency program evaluation problems, needs, and concerns in the area of evaluation.

Federal Evaluation Standards. A number of states indicated that the Federal Evaluation Standards for the vocational rehabilitation program only cover the basic program. One view expressed was that the standards should be expanded to cover program aspects such as the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Program, the business enterprises aspect of rehabilitation services, client assistance projects, and other vocational rehabilitation discretionary activites.

Further, many of the existing data elements for the current standards lack established upper or lower performance levels and are thus difficult to interpret and understand. Another problem indicated was that the standards contain no adjustments for differences between states. For example, small rural states are compared with large urban and industrial states. It was suggested that an additional breakdown, comparing states with similar demographic and geographic characterisitcs be included with the standards information provided the states.

At the present time, Berkeley Planning Associates are working under contract from RSA to develop project evaluation standards. These standards would cover the discretionary programs of RSA. Preliminary work accomplished to date includes the major design issues, implementation guidelines, and a suggested application of the system.

Goals of rehabilitation program evaluation. A basic goal of program evaluation is to determine the extent to which the agency achieves its stated goals and objectives. The Wyoming (combined)[1] VR agency identified four issues related to program evaluation: (a) impact on the target population, (b) degree of client change in reaching gainful activities goals through rehabilitation services (c) program performance in meeting the priority for providing services to the severely handicapped, and (d) effectiveness

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[1]Throughout the monograph, state agencies will be referred to according to the constituency they serve: general and blind (combined), general (general) or visually impaired (blind).

of the program in utilizing available resources. Wyoming noted that the Federal Evaluation Standards resulted in an evaluation of state performance related to those data elements for which upper and lower performance levels had been established.

The goals and objectives of the Maryland (combined) VR agency are to make and coordinate evaluations of agency performance:

1. To ensure the highest possible delivery of services to the severely disabled, the public assistance recipient, and the disabled public service officer

2. To assure handicapped citizens that uniform services will be provided, regardless of place of residence and in keeping with equal opportunity legislation

3. To ensure that counselors are adhering to policies established by federal regulation

4. To ensure prompt, efficient, and thorough services to all the disabled citizens of the state, within the resource parameters of the agency

A major program evaluation goal of the South Carolina (general) VR agency is to establish baseline data for individual geographic areas, facilities, disability groups, and special programs so that more specific goals and standards can be set and that future progress can be measured in a more definitive manner. Proposed studies will explore the needs of different types of clients and the contribution of various types of personnel, facilities, programs, and patterns of service towards meeting these needs. Annual program reviews will be used to study the reasons why clients drop out of the

program and determine ways of reducing the loss. Client follow-up studies will evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the program and client satisfaction with services.

The Montana (general) VR agency sees the overall purpose of program evaluation as a means of assisting top level staff in the area of program management. To effect this purpose, program evaluation has three major goals. The first is the accurate assessment of budgetary and manpower needs. To achieve this goal, the following four objectives have been identified: (a) to regularly monitor the percentage of vocational rehabilitation dollars spent for various agency operations, (b) to conduct a periodic review of staffing patterns and personnel distribution in the central office, district offices, and their sub-offices, (c) to comply with the Federal Standards for Evaluation and to conduct annual statewide studies of program performance, and (d) to employ an annual comprehensive needs assessment survey of all field staff in order to determine and provide appropriate training.

A second major goal of program evaluation, as seen by Montana VR, is to collect and compile baseline and current performance data on various aspects of the program. To accomplish this goal, the following objective has been identified: to design valid instruments and efficient methods to monitor all programs and/or projects being participated in or conducted by the agency. This would include evaluation of program or projects already established and ongoing, and new or future projects. Ideally, program

evaluation concepts should be an integral part of all new projects at their inception. Also, an essential segment of this objective is the establishment of trend data in order to make comparative analyses.

A third major goal of program evaluation identified by the Montana VR agency is the effective utilization of completed evaluation studies. To achieve this goal, the following objective has been identified: to design a system of interaction between the program evaluation specialist and the central office and field staff for the prompt and proper dissemination of collected and interpreted data.

Evaluation problems. A number of states indicated a program evaluation need to assess the state agency's cooperative program with major state institutions and service vendors. Another area of concern was indicated in the area of prevalence. A common concern was to judge the number of disabled in the population and determine whether VR is adequately serving the state's disabled citizens.

A number of states expressed the view that problems related to making program evaluation a management tool include getting staff to accept it, see its value, and be involved in its development and use. Another problem mentioned was coping with constantly changing guidelines and deadlines from central RSA for submitting evaluation data. A third difficulty was in identifying program indicators which are key measures of effectiveness and

efficiency.

A number of states expressed problems associated with the collection of evaluation information. Problems encountered include (a) difficulty of reaching clients approximately one year after they have left the program, (b) uncontrollable independent variables affecting the conclusions drawn from the statistics, and (c) limited staff and staff time available for program evaluation.

The Arkansas (combined) VR agency identified four evaluation problems which they feel require attention at the national level:

1. To identify a standard method for determining the severely handicapped
2. To identify the appropriate dimensions of outcome by measuring rehabilitation client results
3. To identify the appropriate dimensions of outcome for measuring rehabilitation employee satisfaction
4. To identify the appropriate dimensions of outcome for measuring rehabilitation employee effectiveness

It is recognized that each of these four problems constitutes several studies which should result in many dimensions of outcome being identified. A standard method for determining severely handicapped should also include a method for determining the degree of handicap. No single instrument will measure the dimensions of outcome for all rehabilitation clients. Questions posed by Arkansas included: What dimensions of outcome are different across

the various disability groups? What outcome dimensions are different among the various degrees of disability? Without these tools, Arkansas concluded, subsequent evaluations (and candidate areas for evaluation) would be of limited value.

The Texas (blind) VR agency indicated several obstacles which have impeded program evaluation efforts. One problem area has been the Federal Standards for Evaluation. The standards were viewed as being geared primarily to the needs of general rehabilitation agencies and not taking into consideration the circumstances of agencies serving the blind. Another concern was related to involvement of the agency in the development of future evaluation standards. Agency input and involvement was seen as crucial to the development of valid and meaningful evaluation standards and that implementation of such standards within state agencies requires a funding level adequate to support more staff members with high degrees of competency in program evaluation skills.

The Michigan (general) VR agency indicated three evaluation problem areas: (a) Many conceptual and measurement problems in program evaluation remain technically unsolved; (b) program evaluation is very expensive; and (c) there are problems in making evaluation information relevant, timely, and useful. These considerations often result in compromises about study design and the extent of data gathering, thus rendering inconclusive results.

At present, the agency does not have the program evaluation resources to conduct studies of the scope needed to answer many questions.

Five needed evaluation studies were identified by Michigan:

1. Comprehensive and controlled studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services in increasing the employability of handicapped persons and in providing other client benefits. Despite the large amount of work done in program evaluation, there are not controlled studies which demonstrate the overall effectiveness of the state-federal VR program.

2. Studies to estimate the value of VR services in reducing social costs such as income-maintenance payments, health costs, and costs of institutionalization

3. Studies to determine the effectiveness of various methods of outreach, referral, and intake to the VR system, including studies of the effectiveness and costs of "saturation" services

4. Studies to show the relative effectiveness of contrasting service delivery methods which are feasible in VR agencies

5. Studies and models to demonstrate how program evaluation findings in a continuing system such as VR can be related to program decisions and activities and reported to management in a timely fashion

The Vermont (combined) VR agency identified two concerns shared by several states. These were budgetary and manpower constraints. Vermont indicated that these areas made it difficult to complete evaluation studies beyond the federal reporting requirements. Suggestions included increasing the funding level of evaluation units to enable agencies to assign an adequate number of staff to program evaluation.

The high cost of conducting evaluation studies was also expressed. Adequate monies are not presently available to support sampling and survey activities.

Candidate areas for state evaluation studies. The Virginia (general) VR agency has identified a number of program areas which are to be considered for evaluation within the next five years. These are in addition to the required reports on the Federal Evaluation Standards. Most of the studies are in the broad area of severe disability. One goal is to develop an explicit and comprehensive definition of severe disability. Another proposed investigation is a cost-benefit study which should lead to an acceptable formula readily applicable by state agencies to their program data. A third study is an evaluation of the entire social security insurance/social security disability insurance referral system across the country. This evaluation should result in improved methods and means of more successfully dealing with referrals from the social security administration system.

The Rhode Island (general) VR agency has determined several candidate areas for future evaluation, either by RSA or the state agency. Some of the proposed studies included the following:

1. A study of 08, 28, and 30 closures to determine counselor efforts which had a positive impact on the client

2. A follow-up study of clients who have received personal adjustment training at a workshop and were subsequently placed in competitive employment to determine their satisfaction with the workshop experience, their job, and their

chances for upward mobility in their employment

3. A detailed analysis of 08 closures to develop a profile of clients who are least likely to move into the rehabilitation process

4. A study of case review instruments currently used by state agencies for the purpose of developing a universal instrument which will be objective and simple, and will encourage agencies to conduct regular case reviews

5. A comparison and analysis of different mixtures of severely disabled clients within caseloads to determine the optimum percentage which will still result in a substantial number of clients becoming rehabilitated

6. A survey of industry to determine future employment trends and training needs so that agency clients may be prepared for jobs which exist in significant numbers in the economy

Implications. The majority of evaluation issues in this section could be classified within the RSA subgoal of Capacity Building. That is, they were concerned with policy, program and resource management to achieve agency goals. Several recurrent issues emerged. These included (a) a method to define and determine severely handicapping conditions, (b) identification of dimensions of client outcome, (c) studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of VR services in increasing client employability, (d) studies to show the relative effectiveness of contrasting service delivery methods, and (e) studies to determine the impact of services on different disability groups.

Sensitive indicators of client status and change among different dimensions of client functioning (e.g. vocational, social, psychological, and physical) need to be developed to adequately reflect the impact the rehabilitation

program has on clients. Such measures, even if they do exist, are not presently built into the VR data collection system. Therefore, it is difficult to accurately measure and evaluate the impact rehabilitation services have on clients.

Another, and perhaps more fundamental issue, is that VR has not clearly articulated what it can and cannot do for clients. Aside from stating a broad goal such as "to make clients employable," there are no sensitive measures or indicators which relate to the expected outcomes and services VR is able to provide clients. Until the relationship between client needs and VR services to alleviate those problems are clearly defined, a problem will remain in attempting to evaluate many of the concerns expressed in this section.

The Severely Disabled

The 1973 Rehabilitation Act mandated states to give service priority to individuals classified as being severely disabled. This mandate has resulted in a greater number of severely disabled clients being referred, evaluated, and accepted into the rehabilitation program.

The state of Colorado (combined) VR agency indicated a number of problems in providing adequate services to the severely disabled which may suggest to other states how needs, concerns, and issues may be translated into program evaluation studies when a program is implemented to rectify the problem. The purpose of evaluation would be to determine the extent to which the solution alleviates the following problems:

1. Inadequate transportation for clients to evaluation and training programs as well as to employment sites when jobs are available

2. Limited and inadequate evaluations to provide the counselor with appropriate information regarding the assets and limitations of the severely disabled client

3. Inadequate initial and inservice training to the vocational rehabilitation staff regarding the need for the full range of services required and available to the severely disabled individual

4. The lack of understanding on behalf of the employer and the general public as to the capabilities of individuals classified severely disabled

The concerns expressed by Colorado are not unique to that state. The problems expressed in working with the severely disabled are common to many states.

Some approaches to these problems have been suggested by Colorado and other states. Modification of public transportation facilities to accomodate wheelchairs has been suggested for the alleviation of transportation difficulties. Training of rehabilitation facility personnel to use more sophisticated vocational evaluation techniques has been suggested as a solution to the problem of inadequate vocational and work evaluation procedures. Rehabilitation continuing education programs to provide inservice training for counselors and other program staff is being used to upgrade the counselor skills needed to serve the severely disabled. The education of the public is a more involved task. Among suggestions to provide information to the public are lectures, news media advertisements, and articles in magazines and newspapers.

Implications. Some of the critical evaluation issues faced in the VR field are (a) defining who is severely disabled, (b) identifying this target population in the community, (c) conducting outreach efforts to recruit eligible individuals into the VR program, and (d) providing appropriate services once the client has been processed and accepted. Increasing the difficulty of achieving these tasks is the fact that, although the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established the severely disabled as VR's primary target group, no new services were provided to adequately serve these clients.

Perhaps the most critical functions evaluation has with regard to the severely disabled are (a) determining the needs of this target group, and (b) defining the services VR can and cannot provide to meet the identified needs. These two related issues need to be addressed in order for VR to clearly establish goals and objectives for the severely disabled.

This problem will not be easy to resolve. The severely disabled cross many disability groups whose needs are often divergent. The degree of disability is not always a measure of the degree of handicap. One severely disabled individual may not be severely handicapped, whereas a non-severely disabled person may be severely handicapped. Usually services are addressed to handicapping conditions. It is evident that easy solutions to these problems are not readily forthcoming. These are profound questions which go to the center of VR's mission.

Evaluation efforts can be directed at resolving the issues presented in this section so that the most appropriate and effective management of rehabilitation resources will result in meeting the needs of the severely disabled.

Rehabilitation Facilities

According to a number of state agencies, the demand for rehabilitation facilities has increased in recent years. A variety of reasons were given for this change. The most common opinion was that the increased proportion of severely handicapped persons in the agency led to a greater demand for services from rehabilitation facilities. The need to continue development of program evaluation approaches for facilities was frequently mentioned as a means to assure quality of service to the severely disabled. This effort was seen as being coordinated with the accreditation and evaluation procedures of the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

The state agency perspective of evaluation in facilities. Program evaluation in rehabilitation facilities has become a major concern of the state agency. For example, a goal of the Ohio (combined) rehabilitation agency is to increase the quantity and quality of sheltered employment opportunities available to disabled Ohioans. A project in Ohio is assisting facilities in the implementation of internal program evaluation systems. Evaluation Systems of Minneapolis is acting as technical consultant to the project. The initial phase of the project involves helping facilities

define their goals and objectives. The next aspect of the program is the development of reliable evaluation methods to measure how close they actually come to meeting specified goals.

Another concern was expressed by the Massachusetts (general) VR agency. It sees a need to maintain quality rehabilitation services. In order to meet this need, a program evaluation system needs to be developed that will measure (a) the quality of services offered by rehabilitation workshops on an individual basis, considering each workshop's size, organizational objectives, and other unique elements, and (b) the benefit derived by handicapped individuals who have participated in a workshop program but have not achieved the final goal of competitive employment. In Massachusetts, as elsewhere, the lack of a method of evaluating present rehabilitation facility programming impedes identifying remedial action necessary to improve existing programs and evaluate new facilities before the state VR agency enters into a purchase-of-service agreement.

Client services. Some states indicated that rehabilitation facilities are adequately serving the mentally retarded clientele. However, some states indicated the vocational rehabilitation needs of the severely mentally ill and individuals with severe physical disabilities are not being met. In establishing programs to serve these severely disabled client groups, program evaluation is needed to assess their effectiveness in the clients' attain-

ment of employment.

In addition to meeting CARF accreditation and evaluation standards, a number of states expressed the need for rehabilitation workshops to develop independent living programs. Independent living skills are deemed important for clients with severe disabilities. The view was expressed that if the severely disabled are to achieve employment, they need to acquire skills in recreation and leisure activities, homemaking, and personal grooming. The rehabilitation facility is seen as the primary service vendor from which clients would receive these skills.

Implications. Evaluation in facilities is conducted as part of the CARF accreditation process. As a result, many of the state agency concerns focus on whether rehabilitation facilities are providing quality services to VR clients, especially the severely disabled. A related concern is the degree to which facilities are helping clients who do not attain a goal of competitive employment. Because of the wide variations which exist in facilities with regard to size, services offered, ratio of professional staff to clients, and geographic location, it is difficult to develop evaluation criteria which can be uniformly measured across all workshops. Instead, it is necessary to help facilities establish goals and then measure these goals on an individual basis. In effect, the facility is being evaluated in terms of the attainment of its stated goals.

Evaluation of facilities primarily relates to the RSA subgoal of Restoration and Training. The major services of facilities which include work evaluation and work and personal adjustment training are clearly training oriented services. Another service provided by many facilities, job placement, can be classified within the subgoal of Employment.

Personnel Development and Training

The New Hampshire (combined) agency summarized several basic agency staff training concerns. The mission of training is to develop in agency personnel the skills required to rehabilitate disabled individuals. To achieve this, several goals and objectives have been specified.

1. Insure that all staff have the minimum knowledge, skill, and ability to perform their individual jobs
2. Keep up-to-date on changes in the field of vocational rehabilitation
3. Prepare staff to move up the career ladder and assume more responsible positions

Evaluation of staff performance. A concern expressed by many states is the lack of data and methods to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable work performance. The absence of such data gives rise to individually felt training needs which may or may not be related to real training needs. Evaluation of training should focus on performance improvement rather than subjective impressions of participants.

The Michigan VR (general) agency indicated a need to evaluate individual training needs related to agency

priorities and to provide orientation training and continuing education opportunities for all staff. Evaluation of the results was seen as a key element of the training program.

Evaluation of counselor performance. In the area of counselor orientation, the Michigan (general) agency is developing a competency-based training system. It is to be a criterion-referenced measure based on a task analysis of the rehabilitation counselor's role. Evaluation of this project seems to be necessary to assess the model's potential for use in other states.

The turnover rate of counselors was a widely expressed concern. A possible causal factor is counselor burn-out resulting from difficulties in providing service to the severely disabled. Severely disabled clients often require more intensive counseling and related rehabilitation services. Great demands can be placed upon the counselor in this regard and may result in job-related stress and counselor burn-out. To help counselors cope with these pressures, new methods of inservice training and continuing education are required. The role of evaluation in rehabilitation counselor renewal will be to determine which training techniques are most effective. Because the problem of burn-out appears to be pervasive, effective techniques to help counselors work with the severely disabled would appeal to several state agencies.

Implications. It is a common practice of VR agencies to utilize either in-house or rehabilitation continuing education programs to provide inservice training to staff.

Several evaluation questions arise. First, is the training effective in helping staff perform its everyday tasks? Second, is the training program meeting the needs of the staff as related to the priorities of the agency? A related concern is whether the staff employs in its work what it learned in the training program. The third and perhaps most fundamental evaluation question is, what is the most advantageous way to utilize continuing inservice training? Until these questions are answered, it will be difficult to make judgments as to the efficacy of these VR staff training activities.

Personnel development and training does not directly relate to the RSA subgoals. However, because training is often directed towards training in the delivery of services, this area does impact indirectly on all RSA subgoals.

Management Systems

Management systems relate to the internal functioning of the VR agency. As such, the identified evaluation problems are concerned with management issues. Areas which VR programs specified as evaluation needs were summed up by the Illinois (combined) agency and included (a) assurance that managers of the VR program are accountable for all program activities, (b) provision of a mechanism for the development and implementation of program planning and policy development activities, and (c) provision of a means for the continuous and timely monitoring of program goals and objectives.

Another evaluation concern of management is an attempt to match needed resources to the demand for services. The Illinois (combined) agency indicated that raw data depicting the number of handicapped people within a state (estimation of the target population), their disabling condition, and their county of residence are not sufficient information upon which to accurately match services with needs. The Illinois VR agency's solution to this problem is to re-allocate manpower and to readjust other resources accordingly. Program evaluation results would be used to outline the parameters and determine the success of this redistribution.

A number of states have adopted the policy of evaluating specific VR services through counselor reports. Diagnostic training, physical restoration services, and other purchased services are evaluated routinely by the counselors to insure service effectiveness and identify problem areas. In these instances, the evaluation of service effectiveness provided by vendors is primarily the counselors' responsibility.

Determination of agency goals. An evaluation management question is, how are short and long-term goals of the agency established? In the Tennessee (general) agency, goals of the agency are established through a planning process involving all levels of professional management. Each field counselor and district supervisor sets individual goals and objectives for a respective area in cooperation

with each area supervisor. The supervisor establishes goals and objectives within the area of an administrative region. The regional director presents his/her goals and objectives to central office staff to establish agency priorities. A planning advisory committee is in charge of establishing goals and objectives for the agency. This committee is composed of administrative, program, fiscal management, and support staff who develop the plan and provide monitoring and program evaluation procedures to determine goal achievement.

The Tennessee model for determination of agency goals includes many of the constituents of the VR programs, with consumer participation being a notable deficit. However, participation by members of the professional team provides a mechanism for a formative evaluation procedure. Having established the goals and objectives of the agency, the determination of criteria and measures to assess the achievement of the goals is required.

A concern expressed by various agencies is whether program managers and decision makers are receiving the information needed to plan and evaluate the VR program. This can be a difficult question to answer, especially if one is not aware of what additional information might be available or necessary upon which to base policy decisions. The role of evaluation in this situation is to help planners and program decision makers determine what information is required and available for informed policy development and promulgation.

A number of states expressed a view similar to Wisconsin's (combined) agency. A major goal is to re-evaluate the mission of the state rehabilitation agency and isolate the assumptions that are implicit in the mission statement. An evaluation of these assumptions would be done in order to determine the underlying questions relative to these assumptions. For example, what questions must be answered in order to adequately fulfill the mission of the agency?

Computer simulation. The Oregon (general) agency is one of several state agencies developing a simulation model of the VR program. The agency reports considerable progress in the development of a model that simulates the flow of clients in the agency's caseload from referral through the various statuses to closure. Work in the Oregon agency has recently begun on adding client service costs to the model. It is expected that this predictive tool will be able to provide the VR agency with the ability to simulate its caseload and to anticipate expenditures, given the agency caseload and client movement through the VR system. The expected result is much more precise agency planning and resource allocation.

The PFP as a planning tool. The West Virginia (general) agency noted that the PFP is an important planning tool. However, other states expressed a different view of the PFP. It is often seen as a document which contains much repetitive information available from other sources. In addition, it is argued that developing a five year plan

is difficult and often leads to pure guesswork. Perhaps one evaluation task would be to determine whether the PFP actually improves the state agency planning process.

Implications. Program evaluation is generally considered a tool of management. Because of this, the collection of evaluation information can be incorporated into the agency's management information system. As a mechanism providing program data, management systems are critical to the successful conduct of evaluation studies. Before being able to evaluate a program, it is necessary to know what information, especially as it relates to client and agency goals, will be available through the existing information system. Without such knowledge, the evaluation of a program would require collecting data beyond that which is already built into the VR information system. This can be a difficult and time-consuming task. Evaluation information which is an integral part of the information system can be used for the continuous development of short and long range plans, monetary, manpower, and service resource allocation, assessment of the needs of the target population, and other similar activities. Thus, evaluation studies are often highly dependent on the information routinely collected through the management information system. For this reason, it is important to incorporate within the management information system the collection of data which reflects client and agency goals and objectives. It is often the case that evaluation information is based upon the existing data base. In this situation,

the data is made to fit the question. The ideal situation is to first identify the evaluation questions, decide what information is required to answer those questions, and incorporate the required information into the management information system.

Affirmative Action

The affirmative action program of state agencies is mandated by law to operate in three essential areas:

1. Employment in the state agency of the qualified handicapped under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended
2. Equal delivery of services to all VR clients - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964
3. Equal employment opportunity - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 1964, as amended

In accordance with the above, the VR Affirmative Action Units are required to make a concentrated effort to promote the hiring and promotion of qualified handicapped individuals and to assure that they are not otherwise discriminated against. These units must assure an equal delivery of services to all VR clients and must make certain that there is equal employment opportunity for VR employees.

These are the basic guidelines to which all states must comply. Many states indicated that the overall goal of the VR agency in this area is to eliminate any disparity between the proportionate representation of the handicapped in the state's population and their representation in all occupational groups and at all salary levels of the state agency's staff.

Implications. Evaluation activities with regard to affirmative action would center on an examination of the three areas listed above. Programs designed to facilitate affirmative action compliance would be evaluated by the degree to which they achieve the stated goals of the Affirmative Action Plan. Because all states are required to comply to the same guidelines, it is possible that much sharing of information could occur. A coordinated national effort for affirmative action could be implemented. Various states could test different approaches to affirmative action compliance. The programs judged most effective could then be implemented on a national scale.

Two types of very different affirmative action approaches in the VR program can be distinguished. One relates to the employment of handicapped persons by the state agency. The other is concerned with providing an equal delivery of services to eligible clients. To meet these mandates requires the development of separate affirmative action plans.

Audit Deficiencies

All states are required to report in the PFP's on audit deficiencies found in their programs. The relationship between this function and program evaluation is not entirely clear. These tasks are treated as separate issues, yet many of the activities proposed for both appear to cover similar areas.

The Illinois (combined) agency has identified several objectives pertaining to service delivery for which the audit function is important. These include the following:

1. To develop and implement a systematic approach for managing, controlling, and monitoring the rehabilitation process
2. To establish program evaluation audit standards for all rehabilitation programs and grants
3. To purchase quality rehabilitation services and evaluate the utility of these services on a regular basis
4. To evaluate the quality of agency client related service and client rehabilitation outcomes by the development, implementation, and maintenance of specific criteria for service effectiveness

In August, 1974, the Illinois agency established a program assurance unit which conducted audits on a limited basis. In 1977, an internal auditor was employed to provide the agency with the full scope of audit coverage.

A statement by the Pennsylvania (general) agency does little to clarify the difference between program evaluation and the audit function. Pennsylvania identified the following goals and objectives for the audit function:

1. To determine whether or not agency goals are being met
2. To determine the effectiveness of the agency service delivery system
3. To determine the efficiency of program management
4. To determine future resource needs

A wide variation of reactions to the VR audit findings exists within the state VR agencies. At one end of the

continuum is the Illinois (combined) agency which has implemented audit procedures on an ongoing basis and states "the Internal Audit Unit is ... responsible for carrying out activities which give evidence of the level of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which DVR operations are carried out." At the opposite end of the continuum is the California (combined) agency which states only that it feels a discussion in the PFP of audit deficiencies is "inappropriate."

The audit function vs. program evaluation. Over the past several years, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has conducted program administrative reviews and other internal audits of the rehabilitation program. The General Accounting Office has also audited parts of the program. These audits have primarily been conducted by accounting and financial people not directly affiliated with the VR program.

Terms used in some audit descriptions, for example - Illinois, such as "efficiency" and "effectiveness" have also been associated with program evaluation activities. The question arises whether program audits and program evaluation are overlapping tasks. A need for clarification between audit procedures and program evaluation is evident.

Traditionally an audit is thought of as dealing basically with numbers and costs -- a financial accounting. An examination of findings from the VR program audits indicates that the scope of the audits has been broader than just

financial data. There is an apparent attempt to determine the "quality" of the VR program. However, the basic audit function remains to assess the VR agency in terms of fiscal management and compliance with federal regulations.

Audits of the VR program have often been conducted by individuals outside of the actual program. This has given rise to the criticism that auditors cannot really appreciate the uniqueness of the VR program. This view of auditors as "outsiders" is reinforced by the fact that they function relatively independently of the administrators of the VR program. In theory, this should lead to an objective appraisal of the financial condition of the agency and its compliance with federal regulations.

By contrast, program evaluators function, in most instances, as members of VR administrative units. Many of the evaluation tasks with which they are involved stem from concerns related to the impact of the VR program on the client. In general, the program evaluator does not examine the financial records of the agency. The evaluator is not concerned with fiscal management of the VR program; rather, when they are involved with costs of the VR program, it is in terms of the impact monetary expenditures have on providing quality services to clients. An analysis of the relationship of the costs of the program to the benefits received by the client (cost/benefit analysis) is a program evaluation concern. The program evaluators' use of financial

information for assessing program performance needs to be distinguished from the use of financial data to determine the fiscal integrity (audit function) of the agency and fiscal compliance with VR legislation.

Another distinction can be made. The audit function has been employed to investigate program quality assurance. The audit function usually examines individual cases in an attempt to validate case record information with the emphasis on accounting. When case records are examined, they are looked at from a historic rather than formative perspective. When individual cases are reviewed for program evaluation, the purpose is to monitor client progress and to judge when the client is making progress in meeting established goals. Evaluation, in this instance, is concerned with what future services the client might require. As such, it has a formative function.

Implication. Program evaluation and audit reviews are two separate functions. However, there seems to be a gray area in which certain tasks overlap. This is compounded when the audit is used to examine "quality" in the provision of rehabilitation services. There is an apparent need to further clarify the functions of program evaluation and the audit as components of the VR program. Further clarification is required in order to specify what can and can not be expected from each. Defining the role of program evaluation and audit reviews will eliminate the ambiguities surrounding each. Such a resolution would

avoid raising false expectations about what each can deliver and would provide a measure of the degree to which each is fulfilling its mission. There is a need for both functions in the operations of the VR agency. In addition, the information generated by audit reviews and program evaluation needs to be shared so the knowledge gained can best be utilized by all concerned.

Placement Techniques and Procedures

The Arkansas (combined) agency stated several broad placement goals, many of which were expressed by other states. The following were included:

1. Identification and utilization of placement resources
2. Development of placement resources
3. Maintenance of appropriate interaction with placement resources
4. Provision of counseling and guidance of a supportive nature at the time of placement and during follow-up
5. Maintenance of qualified staff through appropriate training in placement techniques and procedures
6. Cooperation with other human service organizations through information sharing

Another representative expression of placement concerns was from New York (general) agency. Placement in New York is seen as an integral part of the rehabilitation process. The following goals and objectives have been established by the New York agency to guide its activities in this area:

1. To provide all clients with the necessary job seeking skills and placement assistance as needed

2. To place all clients into suitable employment compatible with abilities and limitations

3. To examine the special needs which are important to placing the severely disabled and to develop techniques and procedures to assist in their placement

4. To work with business and industry at both the state and local level to develop additional opportunities for placing the disabled

5. To examine all job markets to determine which jobs can be, with some modifications, filled by qualified disabled applicants

6. To work with all segments of the community in the implementation of affirmative action (Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended)

The Minnesota (general) agency discussed a program of using rehabilitation counselors as job placement specialists. Their full-time responsibility is job placement. The effectiveness of this approach needs to be compared (evaluated) with other placement methods, especially those which place full responsibility for the task on the individual counselor.

Problems in job placement. Problems relative to placement were recognized by various rehabilitation agencies. The national economy was cited as an impediment to job placement. Consistently high rates of unemployment in the general population are a major source of difficulty in placing clients in competitive positions. An additional problem is the trend towards technological, knowledge-based and service industries for which few clients have been prepared.

Another factor further complicates the situation. In the VR program it is the counselor who is ultimately responsible for placing the client in a job. This responsibility is often delegated to rehabilitation facilities, workshops, vocational training programs, and other similar programs. Thus, both nationally and within states, there is a broad range of individuals with different backgrounds and levels of experience involved in job placement, using a corresponding range of placement techniques. Because of this wide variation in job placement activity, it is difficult for a state VR agency to attempt to coordinate all resources providing services. This may or may not be a problem in terms of actual job placement. However, it does create difficulties with regard to evaluating the overall effectiveness of a state's job placement efforts and impedes comparison with other states.

Job placement issues. It was a relatively easy task for states to indicate job placement problems and needs. Many such concerns were expressed. The more difficult task was to develop effective intervention strategies to ameliorate the problems related to placement of clients.

Job placement is an important rehabilitation activity. Traditionally it has been considered the "bottom line" in the provision of rehabilitation services. Evaluation activities related to this component of the VR program focus on the agency's effectiveness in placing clients in employment positions. This effectiveness can be judged by evaluating the degree to which job placement goals and objectives have been

attained. A related issue in evaluation of job placement services is to assess the quality of the placements. An important question is whether clients are being placed on jobs commensurate with their abilities and skills.

Some of the evaluation concerns from other areas of the VR program are magnified when translated into job placement needs. The success of other VR services designed to alleviate handicapping conditions of the severely disabled is often evaluated by the successful placement of the client on a job. Rather than evaluating individual services, the effect of the VR program is judged by the end product -- job placement. However, in addition to examining the effectiveness of job placement services, it is important to assess the quality of service previously provided the client.

Implications. Job placement does not exist in isolation from other VR program elements. The issue of providing "quality" services becomes an important variable. If an evaluator assesses only the degree to which job placement goals and objectives are met, it is difficult to indicate the quality of that rehabilitation. The issue of evaluating the benefits received by the client in the VR program relates to assessing the impact of all rehabilitation services on the client. In that way, it would be possible to judge the quality of the placement in terms of what the client has gained (benefits received) from participating in the rehabilitation program. The process of job placement is not an easy task.

Evaluating its effectiveness involves establishing sensitive measures of client functioning and procedures to examine the effectiveness of (a) the state agency job placement program and (b) the quality of that placement in terms of its being congruent with the abilities of the client.

Job placement is categorized in the RSA subgoal of Employment. It is primarily concerned with the outcome of rehabilitation services. Job placement activities are a crucial aspect of the entire VR program. For that reason, job placement is emphasized by state agencies as an important VR service.

Innovation and Expansion

The primary purpose of the Innovation and Expansion (I & E) program is to implement new methods, techniques, and services to groups of severely handicapped who are not adequately served at present. Many program areas have been identified as targets for I & E projects. These include (a) vocational evaluation, (b) job placement, (c) work adjustment training, (d) services to the most severely disabled, (e) programs to provide services to specific industry, (f) innovative programs with business and industry, and (g) programs with special centers which include rehabilitation medicine and workshop facilities.

The Wisconsin (combined) agency's goals and objectives for its I & E program are representative of many states:

1. To establish more specific priorities for use I & E monies. These priorities would bear a closer relationship to state laws and specific agency goals, as well as complying with federal regulations.

2. To establish a mechanism which more thoroughly and objectively solicits and evaluates project proposals. Such evaluation would include factors such as the relationship of the proposal to specific agency needs, possible impact of the proposal on the regular program of the agency, and the potential for the project to be integrated into the agency's regular program when the project is no longer funded through I & E monies.

3. To establish a mechanism which objectively and regularly monitors the progress of projects which have been funded. Such a mechanism would include both the analysis of programmatic as well as fiscal data and should, of necessity, be closely related to the individual objective of the project.

The range of I & E projects covers the spectrum of rehabilitation activities. Three program evaluation problems and needs are evident: (a) the need to develop a comprehensive and coordinated I & E strategy at the federal level, (b) the need to include an evaluation component into the design of I & E projects, and (c) the utilization of information from I & E studies in terms of programmatic change.

Implications. A comprehensive and coordinated I & E strategy would facilitate an elimination of projects in different states which are overlapping and duplicative. Such an approach would help to clarify I & E priorities and assure that the most urgent concerns were studied. Evaluation of the basic client program can help establish priority areas for I & E projects.

Evaluation of I & E projects is essential to judging the value of these projects. Therefore, the evaluation function needs to be an integral part of the project design. Utilization efforts need to be aimed in two directions. One direction relates to programmatic change in agency functioning, based on the results of the evaluation of the project. The other direction involves the communication and dissemination of the product to the rehabilitation community and results obtained. Having satisfied these two conditions, the entire I & E program will be strengthened.

The I & E program relates to all RSA subgoals. The specific subgoal of a particular project is dependent on the nature of that project. It seems evident that the I & E program is an integral aspect of the VR agency's development of quality services.

Changes in Vocational Rehabilitation Programs Resulting from Program Evaluation Studies

As part of the state plan for vocational rehabilitation and to comply with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, state agencies are required to indicate changes which have occurred in their programs resulting from program evaluation studies. Over all, the changes which resulted related to specific and discrete program elements.

A number of states reported making changes resulting from client follow-up studies related to the delivery of

rehabilitation services. Other states expressed concern for the large amount of paperwork involved in processing clients through the rehabilitation system. Some states implemented changes in reporting procedures to cope with this problem. The area of case management was a primary concern to many states. To deal with this, several states made changes in caseload distribution and procedures for processing clients. Some states indicated changes in the goals pertaining to the number of rehabilitations for each rehabilitation counselor. Other changes resulting from evaluation studies made by states related to the order of client selection, strengthening placement services, on-the-job training for clients, redistribution of counselor workloads, change in the financial needs test for the delivery of certain rehabilitation services, and locating and providing services to the severely disabled.

Implications. It was evident that states are utilizing the Federal Evaluation Standards and other evaluation information to make changes in VR agency functioning. There is a need for the development of procedures for the dissemination of evaluation information. This could be done through a sharing among states of evaluations conducted, the information obtained, and program changes which resulted. In this way, it will be possible to help all states gain knowledge of effective and ineffective program strategies. Even if a state is not experiencing a problem in a particular program area, an approach used by another state in that area might

be implemented because it provides a better utilization of manpower, service, and monitary resources than one currently in use. Another means of facilitating a sharing of knowledge is to conduct utilization conferences. Such conferences could be instituted on a regular basis and serve a dual purpose: (a) to enhance communication and dissemination of evaluation information and (b) to afford the opportunity for evaluators to meet and exchange ideas on an informal basis.

Summary of the Current Status of Problems, Needs, and Concerns in State Agency Program Evaluation

Identification of a problem is the first step in the resolution of that problem. The program problems identified are serious concerns. The solutions suggested are attempts to resolve difficult issues. An evaluation effort is needed to determine whether the solutions are effective. Because many states share similar problems, replication of the studies would be a way to assess the reliability and validity of findings. A frequent comment is that a solution to one state's problems would not necessarily apply in another state. Such a statement highlights the need for dissemination of evaluation results and the replication of studies across the states.

It is important to think of the ways program evaluation can be used to help manage the rehabilitation program. Four steps involved in this process are: (a) the assessment of

needs of the target population, (b) the development of agency goals and objectives,based on client needs and legislative mandates, (c) the evaluation of achievement of goals and objectives, and (d) the implementation of results in the program planning and development process. Achievement of these four steps would provide the initial framework for a comprehensive program evaluation strategy.

Program evaluation studies can be implemented to resolve many of the issues identified by this survey. Program evaluation results can also be used to identify additional issues as part of the process of providing quality services to clients. Program evaluation is clearly an important tool of management. As the survey indicates, program evaluation can help management understand problems arising from all aspects of the VR program.

CHAPTER III

REHABILITATION PROGRAM EVALUATION NEEDS AND CONCERNS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Summary of Findings

This monograph surveyed the Program and Financial Plans submitted during fiscal year 1977 by state rehabilitation agencies (general, blind, and combined). The purpose was to determine the problems, needs, and concerns in rehabilitation program evaluation from the perspective of state agencies. An overall finding was that state agencies are giving considerable thought to program evaluation and how it can help the functioning of the rehabilitation program. Categorized by RSA sub-goal areas, the following are the major findings of this survey:

Recruitment and Selection

Candidate areas for program evaluation activities within the sub-goal included:

1. A detailed analysis of 08 closures to develop a profile of clients who are least likely to move into the rehabilitation process
2. A study to judge the number of disabled people in the population to determine whether vocational rehabilitation is adequately serving the states' disabled citizens
3. A study to identify a standard method for determining severely handicapped conditions

4. Studies to determine the effectiveness of various methods of outreach, referral, and intake to the vocational rehabilitation system, including studies of the effectiveness and costs of "saturation" services

5. An evaluation of why clients drop out of the program to determine ways of reducing this loss

Restoration and Training

Candidate areas for program evaluation activities within this sub-goal included:

1. A study of case review instruments currently used by state agencies for the purpose of developing a universal instrument which will be objective, simple, and encourage agencies to conduct regular case reviews

2. A comparison and analysis of different mixtures of severely disabled clients within caseloads to determine the optimum percentage which will still result in a substantial number of clients becoming rehabilitated

3. A study to show the relative effectiveness of contrasting service delivery methods which are feasible in vocational rehabilitation agencies

Employment

Candidate areas for program evaluation activities within this sub-goal included:

1. Client follow-up studies to evaluate the long term effectiveness of the rehabilitation program and client satisfaction with services

2. A method to identify the appropriate dimensions of outcome by measuring rehabilitation client closures

Capacity Building

The majority of the needs and concerns expressed were in this area. A summary of major candidate areas for program evaluation activities within this sub-goal included:

1. Establishment of baseline data for individual geographic areas, rehabilitation facilities, disability groups, and special programs, so that more specific goals and standards may be set and that future progress may be measured in a more definitive manner

2. Exploration of the needs of different types of clients and the contribution of various types of personnel, facilities, programs, and patterns of service towards meeting those needs

3. Education of staff to accept program evaluation as a management tool, recognize its value, and be involved in developing and using it

4. The design of valid instruments and efficient methods to monitor all programs and/or projects being participated in or conducted by the agency

5. The effective utilization of completed evaluation studies

6. Studies and models which demonstrate how program evaluation findings can be related to program decisions and activities. There are problems in making program evaluation information relevant, timely, and useful.

7. Comprehensive and controlled studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services in increasing the employability of handicapped persons and in providing other client benefits. There are no controlled studies which demonstrate the overall effectiveness of the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program.

8. A computer simulation of the vocational rehabilitation system. This would entail the development of a model that simulates the flow of clients in rehabilitation system, from application through various statuses to closure.

9. Determination of the most appropriate mix of severely and non-severely disabled clients in providing effective rehabilitation services

10. Determination of the most effective way to deliver rehabilitation services to the severely disabled

Implications for Practice and Future Development

This survey of the PFP's for program evaluation problems, needs, and concerns has implications for rehabilitation practice in the following areas:

1. Articulation of agency goals and objectives through a continuous needs assessment process

2. Development of linkages between state agencies and RSA to enhance dissemination, utilization, and communication of evaluation information

3. Presentation of evaluation information to program decision makers on a timely basis and in an understandable format

4. Understanding of the political context within which evaluation occurs

5. Development of a comprehensive, competency-based client-outcome evaluation strategy

The five areas listed above transcend any one evaluation problem or concern identified in this monograph. By addressing these areas, a clearer delineation of critical rehabilitation evaluation issues will emerge. This will facilitate the development of evaluation questions, the implementation of evaluation studies based on those questions, and the dissemination and utilization of results from those studies.

Articulation of Agency Goals and Objectives through a Continuous Assessment of Client and Program Needs

A purpose of program evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of a program in achieving its mission. The mission of a program is usually stated in terms of goals and objectives. No firm basis for evaluation exists until the program has stated its overall mission, and goals and objectives. There are three ways in which the goals and objectives of the rehabilitation program can be determined: (a) examination of the legislative basis of the program, (b) survey of program administrators and counselors, and (c) survey of client needs. As VR's mission evolves (new client groups being served, new program initiatives implemented) a need exists for VR to be able to articulate its goals and objectives in relation to these new program directions.

None of the three procedures for the determination of state agency goals and objectives can stand on its own. The agency mission is tempered and modified by the contributions of program legislation, clients, administrators, and counselors. Program legislation provides the structure and legal basis for services. Surveying clients to understand their needs is important as a procedure to establish agency goals and objectives within the framework of the broad outline of legislated services. Administrators and counselors must interpret rehabilitation legislation and understand client needs in order to effectively match these needs with appropriate services.

Examined from another perspective, the contributions to the development of state agency goals and objectives can be viewed as follows. Rehabilitation legislation gives an outline for the scope of services which can be provided to clients. The assessment of client needs indicates the specific services required by clients within the scope of the legislation. An understanding of client needs can also lead to the development of legislation in areas of client needs not previously addressed by th VR program, e.g. independent living. Administrators of the program and counselors translate the needs of clients into specific services. Thus, these individuals need to be aware of both client needs and rehabilitation legislation.

Careful planning is important in the development of state agency goals and objectives. Therefore, it seems logical that the determination of goals and objectives be a continuous process. Two basic roles are suggested for the program evaluator. The first is to help in the assessment of client needs and the interpretation of these into agency goals, taking into consideration the legislative foundation of the rehabilitation program. A second role for the evaluator is to develop evaluation questions and studies based upon the identified agency goals and objectives. The results of the studies would provide a clear indication of client functioning within the rehabilitation program.

A systematic method for establishing agency goals and objectives and determining program evaluation needs and concerns would be a useful tool. The narrative section of the PFP's has not been designed for this task. Because of their unstructured nature, comparisons across states, using the PFP's, are difficult. A way does not exist to systematically analyze PFP data.

An evaluation needs assessment instrument would help establish agency goals and objectives and identify program evaluation needs and concerns. This instrument could be a questionnaire to be completed on a yearly basis by clients, administrators, and counselors. The results could be categorized and amenable to statistical treatment. Development of the questions could be accomplished through a participatory planning process using a representative sample of rehabilitation program constituents. The instrument could be flexible so that new program and client concerns could be incorporated into the questionnaire. Comparisons could be readily made across states, constituent groups, and geographical regions.

The development of a comprehensive rehabilitation program evaluation strategy could be based, in part, on the results of the evaluation needs assessment instrument. This has the potential to facilitate the program planning process and provide a basis for future legislation. At a minimum, the basic goals of the rehabilitation program would be clearly stated and formulated through a systematic process.

Development of Linkages Between State Agencies and RSA

A need exists for the development of effective communication procedures between RSA and state agencies with regard to program evaluation concerns. A basis for the coordination of evaluation activities and the development of future evaluation priorities is required. Two-way communication between the states and RSA is essential to effectively fulfill the mission of program evaluation.

A possible solution would be to include questions on the evaluation needs assessment instrument (previously discussed) which inventories ongoing work, completed studies, evaluation instruments, and other materials developed by state agencies and available in those agencies. The results of the evaluation needs assessment survey could be widely distributed and made available to RSA and state agency personnel. In addition, it would provide RSA with a knowledge of the problems and technology available in individual states. In effect, each state agency would become a repository of evaluation information. As a proposed replacement for part of the PFP narrative section, an evaluation needs assessment instrument would provide a less cumbersome, more scientific and objective indicator of evaluation activities in state agencies.

For RSA it would be possible to do evaluation planning on a systematic basis. Through the proposed linkages with the states, RSA would have knowledge of the capabilities, problems, and needs in each state rehabilitation agency.

Resources could be directed towards providing help where it is needed and resolving problems as they are identified. Overall, linkages with the state agencies using the evaluation needs assessment instrument would result in an effective communication network of state agency capacity to RSA.

The Presentation of Evaluation Information on a Timely Basis and in an Understandable Format

For evaluation information to be useful, it should be available for decision makers soon after the data has been collected. The longer it takes for the results of an evaluation study to become available, the less relevant and applicable are those results. Over time, programs change, new factors arise, different clients are served, and new counselors enter the system, all of which serve to reduce the value of evaluation information.

One partial solution to the problem of evaluation information lag is to make a concerted effort to determine changes made in programs resulting from evaluation studies. Such a process would assess whether a program change implemented as a result of an evaluation study actually helped the program in the area intended. In effect it is an evaluation of the evaluation. To a large extent, this is the core of the program evaluation, planning, and development process. Program evaluation, program planning, and program change are continuous and need to complement one another. Because evaluation would be continuous and the effects of the evaluation observable in terms of planned program change,

constituents may develop a heightened sense of interest and involvement in the evaluation and planning process.

A second solution for alleviating the time lag problem is to utilize the state agency data processing system to process evaluation data. For example, program information could be processed and provided to counselors, administrators, and supervisors as a means of monitoring case flow and monetary expenditure. The "case aging report" is an example of a monitoring procedure currently in use by state agencies. In this way, it is possible for state agencies to process sophisticated evaluation and monitoring information. Many states already possess the capacity for this type of analysis and feedback to agency personnel.

Another need in this area is the presentation of evaluation information in a utilizable format. Toward this end it will be necessary for evaluators to develop methods of data presentation which are understandable even by individuals who do not have statistical and evaluation backgrounds. Graphic descriptions using flow charts, histograms, and bar graphs could be one solution. Narrative descriptions of program functioning are another possibility. A desired outcome would be the demystification of the evaluation function. If evaluation information can be understood by a wide range of state agency personnel, any resistance to its use and continued development would be reduced. The broader the audience of individuals who can understand evaluation data, the more useful the evaluation process becomes. A potential

outcome is an increased amount of support and commitment for the evaluation process.

A key issue to utilization is the understanding of evaluation information by people in the state agency. The basic criteria are that results need to be meaningful, and procedures must be available to implement programmatic change on the basis of evaluation information.

This study indicated that many states are developing computer simulations to understand the rehabilitation program. The full potential and impact of this procedure in the evaluation of the rehabilitation program has not been fully developed. Computer simulation offers possibilities for rehabilitation service. As a planning tool it can be used to anticipate monetary, manpower, and service resources required to rehabilitate a client. These factors could be estimated, based upon the client's disability related to the VR program's experience with clients possessing similar characteristics. As an evaluation tool, computer simulation can be employed to compare actual VR program performance with a simulated performance. Another possibility is to examine changes contemplated for the VR program. These can be initially simulated in an attempt to judge their potential impact. Simulation offers the opportunity to "fine tune" programmatic change prior to its actual implementation.

The Political Context of Program Evaluation

There exists a political element to program evaluation. To understand this political component it is necessary to

examine the purpose of the evaluation and who is going to use the evaluation data. These factors play a major role in the politics of evaluation.

Program evaluation has internal and external considerations. An example of an internal consideration is examination of client outcomes in relation to the attainment of client goals. This information can be used for the planning of rehabilitation services for clients possessing similar characteristics. It is likely that program decision makers, planners, and counselors would be interested in this type of evaluation information. Justification of the program for program sponsors (e.g. congress), is an evaluation for external purposes. A procedure such as cost/benefit analysis is an example of program monitoring to determine the degree to which goals have been met and can be used for justification of the program for external purposes.

Of prime importance to evaluators when designing a study is to determine what is the purpose of the study (e.g. program monitoring, program justification, program planning, organizational development, or innovation and expansion, [Collignon, 1972]) and who will be using the results of the evaluation (e.g. legislators, consumer, program administrators, counselors). A thorough consideration of these issues prior to the implementation of the evaluation study will enable the evaluator to effectively determine the most appropriate forum and constituency for the results.

It is important to understand the limits and con-

straints of evaluation data. This will help to prevent a feeling of frustration if the information does not fully explain a particular issue. For example, evaluation information intended for external use (e.g. for legislators) might do little to explain the impact individual services have on clients of different disability groups. To understand the impact of services on clients would require a different type of evaluation. Such an evaluation might be very meaningful to program planners but have little relevance to external program sponsors.

Understanding the political context is important in the "selling of evaluation." Different constituents (clients, administrators, program sponsors and counselors) of the rehabilitation program have different information needs and require evaluation data which meet those needs. By clarifying the purpose and the audience of evaluation information, it will be possible to more closely design studies to meet specific data requirements.

The role of the evaluator within the political context is of concern. One model of the evaluator is that of an objective investigator of program functioning. This role may be applicable if the evaluator were not a member of the state agency. However, the program evaluator is an integral part of the agency administrative structure. As such, the program evaluator is in a position to play a role in the development, understanding, and utilization of evaluation information.

Because the program evaluator is situated within the agency, that individual is in an advantageous position to determine the information needs of rehabilitation program constituents. The evaluator must then translate those needs into evaluator studies or translate existing evaluation data into a form which meets those needs. Having done this, the program evaluator can act as the interpreter of that information. This can be achieved through written reports or direct contacts. In effect, the evaluator becomes a program consultant and is an integral part of program policy development. The evaluator in this situation makes certain that evaluation information is understood and utilized.

The role model presented for the evaluator is one of an activist in the planning, dissemination, and utilization of evaluation information. As such the evaluator would not react to changing program conditions but would attempt to anticipate and plan for new situations. Viewed from this perspective the evaluator is an important resource for agency planning and policy developement.

The Development of a Competency-based Client-outcome Evaluation Strategy

The development of a comprehensive program evaluation strategy based on client needs would resolve many of the evaluation issues raised by states. A comprehensive approach is required which incorporates a wide range of program considerations in its basic design and structure. Such a strategy would negate the need for independent study each time another evaluation question is raised. A flexible

strategy is required which can handle a variety of program issues and adjust to changes in the program (i.e. new client groups being served and new program directions).

Such a system would be less costly because new evaluation questions could be readily tied into this existing system. Another condition for an approach of this kind is to be sensitive to changes in client functioning resulting from rehabilitation services and to provide other crucial client and program indicators. A third consideration is that such an evaluation system needs to be linked to the VR data base so that evaluation information is routinely collected along with other program information.

An evaluation system of this nature was proposed by Miller, Lee, Wargel, and Won (1977) and expanded by Harrison (1978). The components of that approach can provide a systematic response to the program planning and evaluation efforts needed in the rehabilitation field. The following are the developmental activities for this approach outlined by Miller et al (1977):

1. Document the program development/program evaluation process. A clear description is needed of the parallel and dependent efforts between rehabilitation program development and program evaluation. This statement should include a description of the steps involved in the planning and delivery of rehabilitation programs.

2. Develop a taxonomy of rehabilitation outcomes. This taxonomy should include broad domains of rehabilitation outcomes (e.g. psychological, physical, social, vocational, and economic functioning) in terms of specific terminal (end of rehabilitation process) outcomes related

to each of the broad domains; and intermediary (during program) outcomes which could be used to monitor client progress throughout the rehabilitation process.

3. Develop a catalog of measures related to outcomes. Once taxonomy of outcomes is developed, new and existing rehabilitation outcome measures and program administrative instruments will be linked to the specified outcomes.

4. Relate outcomes to rehabilitation services. As a taxonomy of outcomes is developed, it will be related to existing areas of rehabilitation services (e.g. outreach, assessment, counseling, restoration, training, placement). Outcomes within case service statuses which relate to rehabilitation services will be specified. This will help provide guidelines for determining what outcomes might be expected to occur during particular stages in the rehabilitation process.

5. Describe variables in the rehabilitation system. There is a need to identify, describe, and measure the multiple variables (internal and external) impacting on rehabilitation outcomes.

6. Train program evaluators to use the evaluation system. Effective use of the proposed system will depend on providing technical assistance to train state agency program evaluators to use the system to design evaluation procedure appropriate to the needs of their own agency.

Summary of Implications for Practice and Future Development

The goals and objectives of the rehabilitation program can be determined through three related procedures: (a) an assessment of client needs, (b) the legislative basis of the program, and (c) interview with program administrators and counselors. The contributions of each of these provide a different perspective for the identification of state agency goals and objectives. The determination of VR goals

and objectives is crucial for the evaluation of the program. Without clearly articulated goals and objectives, no basis exists upon which the VR program can be evaluated.

Because the delineation of agency goals and objectives is important, a systematic process is required which would determine these factors. An evaluation needs assessment instrument could contain a wide range of potential agency goals and objectives. The instrument could be administered periodically to constituents of the VR program. This questionnaire could be developed through a participatory planning process and be flexible so as to incorporate changing program and client factors. Being in the format of a questionnaire, the instrument would be amenable to statistical analysis.

To be meaningful, evaluation information needs to be presented on a timely basis and in an understandable format. The program evaluator can play a role in the development, understanding, and utilization of evaluation information. In effect the program evaluator is the state agency evaluation consultant. This role for the evaluator is directly related to the political context of evaluation.

Evaluation information has different purposes and is intended for different audiences. The type of evaluation information needed by legislators for justification of the program is different from the type of information needed by program planners to examine differential outcomes in rehabilitation. Defining the purpose for an evaluation

study and the intended audience will help determine the uses and interpretations that can be made from the data.

Miller (1977) and Harrison (1978) developed an outline of a comprehensive competency-based client-outcome evaluation model. Its central premise is to develop a taxonomy of client outcomes. This taxonomy would be based upon the services which clients receive throughout the rehabilitation process. Measures to assess the clients' attainment of the specified outcome would be developed. With this taxonomy and related measures, clients' progress would be evaluated. The evaluation of the rehabilitation program would be based upon the way in which the program helps clients reach their vocational and related goals.

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